

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method for receiving a program by a user location that is sent
2 from a content provider, the method comprising steps of:

3 recording at least a first segment of each of a first plurality of programs
4 sent from the content provider before any user request for any of the first plurality of
5 programs;

6 detecting the user request for one of the first plurality of programs;

7 recording at least a second segment of each of a second plurality of
8 programs sent from the content provider if the user request is not detected before a
9 stagger period expires; and

10 recording the one of the first plurality of programs if the user request is
11 detected before the stagger period expires.

1 2. The method for receiving the program by the user location that is
2 sent from the content provider as recited in claim 1, wherein the stagger period is a time
3 duration between beginning the first plurality of programs and the second plurality of
4 programs.

1 3. The method for receiving the program by the user location that is
2 sent from the content provider as recited in claim 1, wherein the content provider is a
3 cable television provider.

1 4. The method for receiving the program by the user location that is
2 sent from the content provider as recited in claim 1, wherein the first plurality of
3 programs are multiplexed together in a single datastream.

1 5. The method for receiving the program by the user location that is
2 sent from the content provider as recited in claim 1, wherein:
3 the first plurality of programs is transported with a first transponder, and
4 the second plurality of programs is transported with a second transponder.

1 6. The method for receiving the program by the user location that is
2 sent from the content provider as recited in claim 1, further comprising a step of playing
3 the one of the first plurality of programs.

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1 7. The method for receiving the program by the user location that is
2 sent from the content provider as recited in claim 1, wherein the detecting step comprises
3 steps of:
4 receiving a wireless request from a remote control; and
5 processing the wireless request to determine a desired program.

1 8. The method for receiving the program by the user location that is
2 sent from the content provider as recited in claim 1, wherein the first listed recording step
3 comprises a step of recording the first segment on a mass storage device associated with a
4 set top box that is proximate to the user location.

1 9. A method for receiving a program by a user location that is sent
2 from a remote provider, the method comprising steps of:
3 determining if any of a first segment of each of a plurality of programs
4 sent from the content provider before any user request for any of the plurality of programs
5 are not already stored;
6 recording any first segment of each of the plurality of programs that are
7 not already stored;
8 detecting the user request for one of the plurality of programs; and
9 recording a second segment of the one of the plurality of programs in
10 response to the detecting step.

1 10. The method for receiving the program by the user location that is
2 sent from the remote provider as recited in claim 9, further comprising a step of recording
3 any remaining segments of the one of the plurality of programs.

1 11. The method for receiving the program by the user location that is
2 sent from the remote provider as recited in claim 9, wherein the first segment and the
3 second segment are on different digital channels.

1 12. The method for receiving the program by the user location that is
2 sent from the remote provider as recited in claim 9, wherein the first segment and the
3 second segment are on different transponders.

1 13. The method for receiving the program by the user location that is
2 sent from the remote provider as recited in claim 9, further comprising a step of playing
3 the one of the plurality of programs.

1 14. The method for receiving the program by the user location that is
2 sent from the remote provider as recited in claim 9, wherein the detecting step comprises
3 steps of:

4 receiving a wireless request from a remote control; and
5 processing the wireless request to determine a desired program.

1 15. The method for receiving the program by the user location that is
2 sent from the remote provider as recited in claim 9, wherein the first listed recording step
3 comprises a step of recording the first segment on a mass storage device associated with a
4 set top box that is proximate to the user location.

1 16. A method for receiving a program by a user location that is sent
2 from a remote provider, the method comprising steps of:

3 recording at least a segment of each of a first plurality of programs sent
4 from the content provider before any user request for any of the first plurality of
5 programs;

6 detecting the user request for one of the first plurality of programs; and
7 continuing to record the one of the first plurality of programs beyond a
8 stagger period based upon the detecting step.

1 17. The method for receiving the program by the user location that is
2 sent from the remote provider as recited in claim 16, wherein the stagger period is the
3 time between beginning the first plurality of programs and a second plurality of programs.

1 18. The method for receiving the program by the user location that is
2 sent from the remote provider as recited in claim 16, wherein the recording step
3 comprises a step of recording the segment on a mass storage device associated with a set
4 top box that is proximate to the user location.

1 19. A method for receiving a program by a user location that is sent
2 from a content provider, the method comprising steps of:

3 recording a first segment of the program sent from the content provider
4 before any user request for the program;
5 detecting the user request for the program;
6 recording a second segment of the program if the user request is detected
7 before the period expires; and
8 discontinuing the recording of the first segment if the user request is not
9 detected before a period expires, wherein the period is less than a duration of the
10 program.

1 20. The method for receiving the program by the user location that is
2 sent from the content provider as recited in claim 19, wherein the detecting step
3 comprises a step of detecting the user request for the program during the step of recording
4 the first segment.

1 21. The method for receiving the program by the user location that is
2 sent from the content provider as recited in claim 19, wherein the recording steps
3 comprise a step of recording on a rotating disk at the user location.